

Filed for intro on 01/28/2002
SENATE BILL 2239 By
Dixon

HOUSE BILL 2616
By Towns

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 2, relative to reading education.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 1, Part 2, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

§49-1-218.

(a) To address severe reading deficiencies in individual, low performing schools, there is established a reading instruction pilot program to utilize scientifically-based, effective techniques of reading skills instruction based upon a strong emphasis on phonemic development through stories that students find to be both readable and enjoyable. The commissioner of education shall name a pilot program coordinator who shall possess good administrative and organizational skills and who shall be well-versed in the principles and techniques of reading skills instruction based upon phonemic development. In consultation with the affected local education agencies, prior to the 2002-2003 school year, the commissioner of education shall designate up to five (5) elementary schools, within each of the following municipalities, to participate in the pilot

program: Memphis, Nashville, Knoxville, Chattanooga and Jackson. To be so designated, each school must include grades K-3, must consistently score among the state's lowest performing schools on statewide standardized tests and must obtain the advance approval of its LEA board and school principal.

(b) Each school within the pilot program shall receive a grant sufficient to employ one full-time, trained reading teacher for grades K-3 for a period of six (6) years. The LEA operating each participating school shall be responsible for selecting a teacher to attend a state-sponsored reading education institute to be conducted during the summer of 2002. For purposes of the pilot program, in order to qualify as a trained reading teacher, a teacher must attend the summer 2002 reading institute. The principal of each participating school must also attend the summer 2002 reading institute.

(c) In the fall of 2002, one trained reading teacher shall be assigned to each participating school as a full-time reading teacher for grades K-3. Each such assignment shall be made for the six-year period of the pilot program. In each participating school, the duties of each such reading teacher shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Assist in the selection, distribution and usage of appropriate K-3 reading curriculum based upon scientifically-based, effective techniques of reading skills instruction placing a strong emphasis on phonemic development through readable and enjoyable stories;

(2) Train, supervise and assist all K-3 classroom teachers to achieve more productive results in reading skills instruction through appropriate usage of scientifically-based, effective techniques placing strong emphasis on phonemic development;

(3) Diagnose the reading proficiencies and deficiencies of each K-3 student and assist all classroom teachers in prescribing and implementing specific, personalized interventions to overcome such deficiencies;

(4) Monitor and measure, on an ongoing basis, the progress of each K-3 student in acquiring and enhancing reading skills and strive to ensure that each student reads at his or her grade level or higher;

(5) Assist all classroom teachers to foster a learning environment in which students and their parents develop an appreciation for the communicative and creative powers of the written word and in which students and their parents learn that reading is important, fun and rewarding;

(6) Work with the local school board, the school principal, the school librarian and the local parents organization to ensure that the school library contains a wide variety of reading materials that students find to be readable and enjoyable;

(7) Implement a system of incentives, rewards and/or recognition to encourage students to read at home; and

(8) Assist the pilot program coordinator in measuring and enhancing the success of the pilot program.

(c) The pilot program coordinator shall publish an annual report of departmental findings and recommendations. The report shall be delivered to the select oversight committee on education and to each affected local education agency.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2002, the public welfare requiring it, and is hereby repealed on June 30, 2008.